

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 410
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 12296

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IR
SUBJ: IRANIAN POLICY OF GULF SECURITY

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

FOLLOWING ARE EXTRACTS FROM AN EDITORIAL DECEMBER 12 IN KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL WHICH CAPTURED WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE IRAN'S POLICY TOWARD THE GULF REGION SO WELL THAT IT MUST HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY INSPIRED. NOTEWORTHY IS THE ELEMENT OF PATIENCE EXPRESSED ON MUTUAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, BALANCED AS IT IS BY CONTINUING DETERMINATION TO WORK TOWARD THE GOAL OF MUTUAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS EVEN WHILE BEGINNING WITH MORE MUNDANE RELATIONSHIPS SUCH AS TRADE, DEVELOPMENT, AND BUSINESS EXCHANGES. FACT "ARRANGEMENTS" IS IN PLURAL WOULD INDICATE IRANIANS ARE KEEPING OPTIONS OPEN REGARDING POSSIBILITY OF A SERIES OF BILATERAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS EVOLVING AS A PRELUDE TO OR SUBSTITUTE FOR SINGLE REGIONAL DEFENSE AGREEMENT, WHICH EDITORIAL SAYS COULD "TAKE A NUMBER OF FORMS, FROM A LOOSE UNDERSTANDING TO A FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT."

2. NOTING THAT TWO GOI MINISTERS ARE SIMULTANEOUSLY ON TOUR AT PRESENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF REGION, EDITORIAL MAKES
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THE CONNECTION

BETWEEN MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND
FINANCE ANSARY'S TRAVEL FOR PURPOSE OF ARRANGING EXCHANGES
IN HIS FIELD AND FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY'S TOUR TO FORGE
CLOSER POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS. EDITORIAL DOES NOT REVEAL
IF SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS ARE SPECIFICALLY BEING EXPLORED
BY KHALATBARY IN ABU DHABI, DUBAI, OR BAHRAIN, BUT
(IN GOOD IRANIAN FASHION) IT DOES NOT EXCLUDE THAT
POSSIBILITY EITHER. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

3. REFERRING TO RECENT GULF FOREIGN MINISTER' CONFERENCE,
EDITORIAL SAYS:

"THE CONFERENCE DID NOT RESULT IN A FIRM COMMITMENT BY THE
FOREIGN MINISTERS TO THE IDEA OF A REGIONAL DEFENSE AGREE-
MENT. NEVERTHELESS, THE MERE FACT THAT THE MEETING TOOK
PLACE AT ALL, THAT IT ENJOYED SUCH FULL ATTENDANCE WAS HIGHLY
SIGNIFICANT. IT MEANS THE WORK OF FORGING LINKS BETWEEN THE
PERSIAN GULF STATES IN THE DEFENSE OF THEIR REGION AND
INTERESTS HAS BEGUN.

"THE ADVANTAGES OF SUCH MUTUAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS ARE
OBVIOUS ENOUGH. THE PERSIAN GULF STATES, SITTING ON TOP OF
FOUR-FIFTHS OF THE WORLD'S EXPORTED OIL, WOULD HAVE THE MEANS
OF PROTECTING THEIR VITAL WATERWAY AND THEIR VALUABLE OIL
WEALTH. AN ALLIANCE WOULD DEPRIVE ANY OF THE GREAT POWERS OF
AN EXCUSE FOR SEEKING A MILITARY FOOTHOLD IN THE REGION. IT
WOULD CONSIDERABLY DIMINISH THE CHANCES OF AN EXTENSION OF
GREAT POWER RIVALRIES IN THE REGION. IT WOULD PROVIDE THE
SMALLER AND WEAKER STATES WITH INSURANCE AGAINST OUTSIDE
AGRESSION.

"THERE ARE OF COURSE BARRIERS TO BE OVERCOME. THE BIG POWERS
DO NOT NECESSARILY WELCOME CLOSER TIES BETWEEN PERSIAN GULF
STATES, SINCE THIS WOULD LESSEN THEIR OWN INFLUCENCE AND
OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERFERENCE. IRAQ HAS YET TO MAKE UP ITS
MIND FULLY ON THE BENEFITS OF SUCH AN ALLIANCE, ALTHOUGH IT
HAS MANAGED TO REPAIR FENCES WITH ITS NEIGHOBORS. THE SMALLER
SKAIKHDOMS ARE ONLY NOW GORPING THEIR WAY TOWARDS A POLICY.
THEY WILL REQUIRE TIME TO FIND THEIR FEET AND WALK ALONG THE
PATH WHERE THEIR MOST REWARDING INTERESTS LIE.

"THESIGNS ARE ENCOURAGING... IT IS NOT EXPECTED THAT MUTUAL
SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AMONG THE PERSIAN GULF COUNTRIES ARE
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AROUND THE CORNER. IN FACT, DISCUSSIONS AND EXCHANGES MAY
STRETCH FOR MANY MONTHS TO COME. THE EDIFICE CAN ONLY BE
BUILT UP SLOWLY, STEP BY STEP. IN CAN, OF COURSE, TAKE A
NUMBER OF FORMS, FROM A LOOSE UNDERSTANDING TO A FORMAL
ANNOUNCEMENT. BUT HTE SEED OF THE IDEA HAS BEEN PLANTED,
AND IT SHOULD BE NURTURED AND ALLOWED TO GROW.

"IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT THE PERSIAN GULF COUNTRIES, CLOSE
NEIGHBORS, SHARING A GEOGRAPHICAL WATEEWAY, A COMMON

INTEREST IN OIL, A COMMON RELIGION SHOULD GRADUALLY COME TOGETHER. THEY WILL DO SO MORE QUICKLY IF AN IMPETUS IS GIVEN TO TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION AMONG COUNTRIES IN THE REGION. FOR THIS REASON, ANSARY'S CURRENT TALKS WITH LEADERS OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES IS OF SIGNIFICANCE."

4. NOTE: THIS EDITORIAL (PARA 3, THIRD SUBPARAGRAPH ABOVE) IS SEOND EXAMPLE IN KAYHAN WE HAVE NOTED RECENTLY OF U.S. BEING LUMPED IN AS ONE OF THE "BIG POWERS" WHICH "DO NOT NECESSARILY WELCOME CLOSER TIES BETWEEN PERSIAN GULF STATES." WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS REPRESENTS GO'S REAL OPINION BUT SUSPECT IT IS BEING TRIED OUT AS STALKING HORSE TO BALANCE OFF AGAINST THE ARGUMENT THAT ANY SECURITY PACT WOULD BE ANTI-SOVIET. WE SHALL IN DUE COURSE BE CHECKING MORE DIRECTLY TO SEE IF OUR CONJECTUE IS CORRECT.
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